



The City of Santa Clara

It's YOUR community... get involved!

Participate • Learn • Volunteer • Share • Connect • Lead

www.santaclaraca.gov/volunteer

A community is more than the place where you live and work – it is a group of people who have something in common. When individuals come together to help one another, share good times and bad, and pool resources, everyone in the community benefits.

There are many ways to be actively involved in your community. Voting, watching City Council meetings, and keeping abreast of City issues under discussion are actions of involved citizens. Helping an elderly neighbor put garbage and recycling carts at the curb, making a purchase from a Scout troop that has a fundraising project, and picking up litter while visiting a neighborhood park are other ways that residents are involved with their community in their daily lives.

In Santa Clara, thousands of residents go beyond these steps to become more actively involved through volunteering with the City, a school, a faith group, a service club, or a nonprofit organization. They have learned through personal experience

that volunteering brings as much joy to the volunteer as it does to those who benefit from it. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “It is one of the most beautiful compensations in this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”



Volunteer nurse Kristen Cowen at the Senior Center with May Chu. Santa Clara seniors benefit from the services offered for free by generous, caring residents.

This special section describes many of the ways that residents of Santa Clara are involved in the community, enhancing the quality of life of all who live, work, play and visit here. It also lists many opportunities that are available for anyone who wants to become more involved by learning and leading, sharing their talents and skills, meeting and connecting with other residents, participating in government and community life, and/or volunteering to provide service to others.

One of the City Council goals for the next two years is “connect with community,” with an emphasis on encouraging more citizen engagement through volunteering. Santa Clara is YOUR city and increased involvement will benefit us all.

Volunteering is part of America's – and Santa Clara's – heritage

Volunteering – helping others by sharing time and skills – has been part of American culture from the early days of colonists and pioneers who needed community support systems in order to survive. Benjamin Franklin founded the first volunteer firehouse in 1736 and the Red Cross was started in 1881. Service clubs such as Rotary, Soroptimists, Lions and Kiwanis came on the scene in the early 1900s. During the Great Depression, volunteers ran soup kitchens and in World War II, Americans at home did everything they could as volunteers to support the troops – growing Victory gardens, collecting tin and other needed materials, and serving refreshments and goodwill at train depots and USO (United Service Organizations) canteens.

By the 1970s, the importance and value of volunteers was officially recognized when the U.S. Office of Volunteer Development was established to advocate for volunteerism and to showcase the link between volunteering and citizenship.



Santa Clara residents during World War II volunteered to collect scarce materials for the war effort.



Volunteer fire companies have protected the Santa Clara community since 1854. The Hope Hose Company is shown here in 1913 with its new Seagraves fire engine. The Santa Clara Fire Department still provides volunteer opportunities through its Volunteer/Reserves program, open to residents 18 years and older who want to receive 40 hours of fire service training and hours of actual incident experience.

The tradition continues today. In 2008, it is estimated that one in four Americans, 61.8 million people, volunteered in some capacity – donating eight billion hours of service in communities across the country, according to volunteeringinamerica.gov.

Harriet Naylor, former national director of the Office of Volunteer Development, once said, “Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them.”

Local museums rely on volunteer support

The two art museums and two historical museums based in Santa Clara rely heavily on volunteers to keep their doors open and their collections accessible to the community. They are not disappointed. Residents volunteer as docents and in other capacities, and community donations of funds and in-kind services are crucial to the operations of these treasured community resources.

The Triton Museum of Art and the de Saisset Museum on the Santa Clara University campus are able to bring in world-class exhibits because of the support of the community. Special events at the Headen-Inman House and the Harris-Lass Historic Preserve, such as the annual Afternoon Tea and Vintage Fashion Show and the Historic Home Tour, not only showcase the rich and vital history of Santa Clara, they add to the variety of experiences available to residents and visitors throughout the year.

Ask about volunteer opportunities at the museums the next time you visit.



Volunteer docent Mary Ann Marinshaw explains old-fashioned kitchen appliances from the last century to visitors at the Harris-Lass Historic Preserve.

City appreciates, recognizes public service

Two City recognition programs recognize local residents involved in the community who represent “the best of the best.”

The “Those Who Inspire” Recognition Award singles out individuals who, through their own inspiring actions, initiative and dedication, have performed exceptional service or exemplary long-term service to benefit the community and served as an inspiration to others. Past recipients are Emma Kaliterna, who has volunteered for decades, and David Ladd Anderson, a music educator at Buchser Middle School who goes beyond his busy schedule with school performing groups to direct a band of special education students.

The Neil Henry Recognition Award honors community volunteers who perform exceptional or exemplary long-term service, such as JoAnn Silva who has volunteered at the Santa Clara Senior Center for more than 20 years and Cleo Stuckrath, the creator of the annual Showtime melodrama event that entertains the community and raises money for senior health programs.

Both awards acknowledge the role of citizen contributions in making Santa Clara a great place to live. For information on how to nominate individuals for this recognition, call 615-2210.

Value of volunteer time to the City...



priceless

Last year, City government benefited from the skills, talents and time of 1,404 active volunteers who contributed about 47,300 hours to various City departments and programs. If calculated using the standard formula of \$20.85 per hour for volunteer time, these volunteers are donating nearly \$1 million to the City. But the true value of their service – counting their unique skills, talents, savings of staff time, and civic engagement – is priceless.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; it's the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

Examples of volunteer achievements are everywhere in Santa Clara



EL CAMINO BELLS

Thanks to the dedicated work of the local branch of the California Woman's Club, three distinctive bell markers located along El Camino Real in Santa Clara mark the historic route of “the king's highway,” the trail taken by Spanish padres when they established missions in California in the 1700s. These important symbols of the state's early history were almost lost to today's generation until the women, in cooperation with Native Daughters of the Golden West, took on the project of restoring them.

ULISTAC NATURAL AREA

It took two years for volunteers to transform 40 acres into the Ulistac Natural Area, a passive recreation and public education site now part of Santa Clara's park system. Volunteers cleaned out trash and weeds and replanted the land with 200+ trees and more than 1,000 shrubs native to this area of California. Every month, volunteers return to Ulistac to continue the restoration and maintain this unique open space.



VETERANS MEMORIAL

Santa Clara residents who wanted a permanent tribute to local men and women who served in the U.S. military took the lead on raising funds for the Santa Clara Veterans Memorial in Central Park. Each branch of the military is honored on six black granite pedestals that surround an oval of brick pavers inscribed with the names of individuals donors chose to honor.

SANTA CLARA DEPOT

The South Bay Historical Railroad Society is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization founded in 1985 to restore and maintain the historic former Southern Pacific Santa Clara Depot and to maintain a museum and a library of railroad-related information. As a result of their efforts, Santa Clara residents and visitors can learn about the heritage of local railroads. A model train show held each year showcases western railroading and displays a collection of railroad artifacts provided by long-time local families.



Serving on Commission, Committee, Board is one way to get involved

Since its incorporation as a city in 1852, Santa Clara has been fortunate to have hundreds of citizens step forward to serve on one or more of the City's Commissions, Committees or Boards. Each of these entities has a different focus, but all serve as important sources of community input into policy decisions made by Santa Clara's elected leaders. Here are some of the opportunities:

- Board of Library Trustees
- Civil Service Commission
- Cultural Advisory Commission
- Historical & Landmarks Commission
- International Exchange Commission
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Senior Advisory Commission
- Youth Commission [ages 12-19]
- Housing Rehabilitation Loan Committee

Appointment terms vary, so there are frequently openings. For a full list of committee opportunities or to be placed on a mailing list to be notified when there is a vacancy, email the City Clerk's Office at clerk@santaclaraca.gov or call 615-2220.

Giving homeless cats and dogs a future

Volunteers at the Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority (SVACA) are key components in the success of the region's only cageless animal center. Volunteers exercise, groom and socialize adoptable dogs and cats, and foster young, sick or injured animals in their homes. There are hundreds of animals who need help to live healthy, happy lives in the care of a loving companion.

Community members can also support the goals of SVACA by donating items on the agency's wish list on its website, www.svaca.com, or making a financial contribution. For information, call 764-0344.



Volunteers help homeless cats and dogs become socialized and ready for a new, loving family.

In emergency or disaster, residents rely on each other

For the past several years, the City has urged all residents to become better prepared for a major disaster such as an earthquake. The goal is for every household to be ready to be “on their own” for at least 72 hours, in case emergency personnel are overwhelmed and cannot respond immediately.

No matter what the emergency or disaster, neighbors should be able to count on each other for help. Several programs offered to local residents help families and neighborhoods learn how to be more effective as a safety net for other residents.

- There are more than 90 **Neighborhood Watch** programs established in Santa Clara to prevent crime, identify neighbors who are frail or disabled and might need a helping hand, and learn about disaster preparedness. For information, call 615-4876.



Residents take training programs to learn how to help fire and police department personnel in emergency situations.

Throughout my life, I've seen the difference that volunteering efforts can make in people's lives. I know the personal value of service as a local volunteer.

Jimmy Carter

There are many opportunities to get more involved with your community

Be a meter reader

If you like to walk long distances in all types of weather, help out the City by being a meter reader. Adults only and you must make a 12-18 month commitment. For information, call 615-2322.

Clean a park

Help City staff clean and maintain parks. For information, call 615-3775.

Coach a kid

The Santa Clara Police Activities League (PAL) is a nonprofit organization that uses sports to teach youth confidence, teamwork and respect for others. Volunteers are needed to help with BMX, fishing, softball, boxing, golf, soccer, bowling, wrestling and judo. Competent community volunteers lead PAL programs. For more information, call 615-4880.



The snack bar at the Senior Center relies on volunteers for staffing.

Crew a festival

Be part of the crew of hundreds of volunteers who put on the City's biggest annual festival – the Art & Wine Festival in September – that draws more than 50,000 to Central Park. Tasks include helping artists set up their booths, assisting in the Kids Kingdom area, and general set up and clean up. Call 615-3740 to learn about openings.

Donate a book or help sell them

Sales of books donated by the community generate funds for the Foundation & Friends of the Santa Clara City Library that supports library services and programs. Volunteers staff a lobby bookstore at the Central Park Library and organize book sales on the third Saturday of the month. For information, call 615-2987.

Fight a fire

Become a volunteer/reserve firefighter to help professionals with emergency response and public education and outreach. You must be over the

age of 18 and in good physical condition.

To learn more, email kclerk@sat.com.

Find a business

Help find new businesses to move to Santa Clara that will increase business tax revenue for City services. Analytical, research and computer skills a must. Flexible times Monday through Friday, with a three month commitment. Sound interesting? Call 615-2333.

Help out Santa

Dress as Santa and his helpers and make home visits to residents of Santa Clara during the holiday season. To sign up, call 615-3740.

Hide an egg

Help set up and run activities at the annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt on the Saturday before Easter. Ages 12 and up are welcome to volunteer. Call 615-3760.

Improve adult literacy

Tutor English-speaking adults one-on-one to help them improve basic reading, writing or math skills. Requires a commitment of two hours a week for at least six months. For information, call 615-2956.

Look up history

If you are already familiar with genealogy research, you can become a genealogy consultant and help Santa Clara residents get started on family history research. Flexible hours. To get started, call 615-2919.

Power walk

Lead a group of seniors on a “walk and talk” that improves their physical and emotional health on Wednesdays, from 10-11 a.m. To get on the list of volunteers, call 615-3170.

Shelve library materials

Sort and shelve library materials such as books, DVDs, CDs and periodicals according to the library classification system. You should be able to easily arrange items in numerical and alphabetical order. To sign up, call 615-2919.



Volunteers are crucial to the success of therapeutic recreation programs offered to children and adults with disabilities.

Showcase a museum

Docents are needed for the newest museum in Silicon Valley – the Agnews Historic Cemetery & Museum in the Rivermark neighborhood. Duties include opening and closing the new visitor center and greeting visitors. For details, email ldjeanvier@santaclaraca.gov.

Supervise after-school programs

Volunteers age 15 and up are needed to supervise different program areas at the Youth Activity Center Monday through Friday, 2:30-5:30 p.m. Call 615-3760.

Watch seniors play

Serve as an attendant in the Senior Center Woodshop, Computer Lab or Billiards Room. Friendly, responsible help needed Monday through Saturday. For information, call 615-3170.

Work in the office

Volunteers help with filing, data entry, research projects and customer service in many City department offices. Time commitment is flexible, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. To see a list of current opportunities, visit the City website www.santaclaraca.gov.



Ed Krauth is one of dozens of residents who help out in the offices of City departments.

Write a check

Residents support City events and assistance programs by making a voluntary donation when paying their utility bills through the “Give A Little...Help A Lot” program. To learn more call 615-2210. The Mission City Community Fund is an all-volunteer organization that raises funds to enrich the quality of life in Santa Clara. For information, visit www.missioncityfund.org. Friends of Parks & Recreation provides financial and volunteer assistance to individuals and groups who participate in Santa Clara sports and activities. For more information, call 615-2260.

Citizens extend hand of friendship to Sister Cities

After President Dwight D. Eisenhower challenged cities in the U.S. in 1956 to better international understanding through cultural exchange programs, a group of citizens in Santa Clara banded together to establish Sister City relationships with communities in other parts of the world. The City has active, reciprocal relationships now with Izumo, Japan and Coimbra, Portugal.



Santa Clara's Gingold family hosted Misa Moriyama from Japan. Hundreds of local families have shared their homes with visitors from Santa Clara's two Sister Cities and learned more about the world from their guests.

Santa Clara Sister Cities Association is a nonprofit organization comprised of volunteers who arrange for students from the two Sister Cities to visit Santa Clara, and for local students to make trips to the communities in Japan and Portugal. Students stay in the homes of residents who offer their hospitality as a way of promoting international peace and understanding.

To learn more about their other activities and how you can get involved, contact Santa Clara Sister Cities Association President Debi Davis at debid56@comcast.net.

Explore a community leadership role

Each year, about 25 residents enroll in Leadership Santa Clara, a six-month course that prepares interested individuals in becoming community leaders. Classes are held at a variety of Santa Clara locations, offering students the chance to get behind-the-scene tours of some of the organizations that serve the community. Topics include City history, governance, public services, transportation, environment, business climate, arts and culture, health care, and regional issues. Special programs include a Public Safety Day with demonstrations and visits with police and fire personnel and Education Day with visits to a local elementary and high school.

For information on how to enroll, call 615-2210 or email the program coordinator, Scott Summerfield, at smmrfld@aol.com.

Getting involved for a sustainable future

Community involvement can begin at home when residents make changes in their daily lives that help the City of Santa Clara conserve resources and protect the environment. Actions such as reducing water use so that the City meets and exceeds the 15% water conservation mandate from the state, keeping pollutants out of storm drains, recycling and reusing whenever possible, and walking and biking instead of using a car are voluntary efforts that make a big difference in achieving a sustainable future.

Customers of Silicon Valley Power, the municipal electric utility, can volunteer for the Santa Clara Green Power program in which they choose to pay a slightly higher rate to support 100% renewable energy from wind turbines and solar energy facilities.

Many residents are also voluntarily paying an additional fee for their electricity to fund the Neighborhood Solar Program. Donations are matched, dollar-for-dollar by Silicon Valley Power and the fund is used to install solar systems in schools and nonprofit agencies. To signup, call 244-SAVE (7283).

Why do people volunteer?



There are many motivators that get people up and out of their chairs and out into the community to help others:

- To solve problems
- To improve lives
- To meet people and make new friends
- To share a talent or skill
- To get work experience or try out a career
- To be of service
- To have fun

What rarely motivates volunteers is improving their health, but researchers are now measuring the wellness benefits that volunteers receive including a positive feeling referred to as "helper's high," increased trust in others, and increased social and political participation. The Corporation for National and Community Service reports there is a strong relationship between volunteering and health: lower mortality rates, greater functional ability and lower rates of depression. And that's called a win-win situation for everyone!

Some take to the stage to enrich community

Santa Clara residents who love to sing, dance, act and entertain have many opportunities to share their talents with the community by participating in one of the performing arts groups that add to the tapestry of life in this community. Opera, chorale, ballet, drama, comedy and melodrama are just a few of the arts presented each year in Santa Clara. To learn more about local arts groups, call 248-ARTS or email pmorrison@santaclaraca.gov.

We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill

Homes built by volunteers

One of the most dramatic and recent examples of the power of volunteers in Santa Clara was the construction of a cluster of six single family homes on Gianera Street, under the direction of Habitat for Humanity. This was the second Habitat project in Santa Clara.

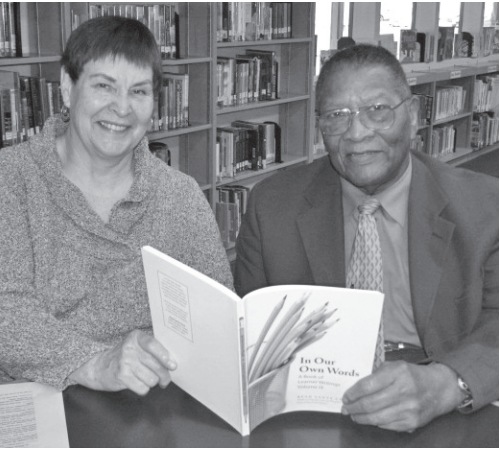
Approximately 2,000 volunteers spent 35,000 hours sawing, hammering, roofing, painting, and more to build affordable homes for low-income families.

To learn more about future Habitat for Humanity home-building projects in Santa Clara, visit the website www.habitatsiliconvalley.org.



Six low income families were able to move into their own homes thanks to the tireless efforts of Habitat for Humanity volunteers.

Helping to improve adult literacy skills one-on-one



Linda and Moses work together, one-on-one, on reading skills.

"What makes tutoring rewarding for me? It is the eagerness and happiness on my learner's face when he knows he is making progress... It is the many people I've met and friendships I've found ... It is the knowledge that I am sharing my skills to help someone gain skills of their own. It is the hope that this effort that my learner and I are both making will have a positive impact on his life, long after we cease meeting each week."

Marilyn, Read Santa Clara Volunteer

Since 1996, volunteers with Read Santa Clara, Santa Clara City Library's adult and family literacy program, have helped more than 100 adult learners each year improve the basic reading, writing and math skills they need to do everyday tasks, such as reading to their children, filling out a job application, or reading medicine labels.

One in seven adults in Santa Clara County lacks basic literacy skills according to estimates provided by the U.S. Department of Education. The reasons for lower levels of literacy are varied including limited education, learning disabilities, English as a second language, and other factors.

No teaching experience is needed to serve as a tutor; Read Santa Clara provides tutor training and on-going support. Volunteers invest at least two hours a week for a minimum of six months. For information, call 615-2956 or email readsantaclaraca@santaclaraca.gov.